



Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds

September 2003

General Plan Newsletter #2



Asilomar State Beach

Our 'Concept Plan' will define how we can best preserve and enjoy Asilomar's unique values and resources.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation is developing a new General Plan for Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds. We have recently completed a *Concept Plan* that represent the long range vision for future planning, provides recommendations for facilities and improvements, and set guidelines for managing the park so it can be enjoyed for years to come. In our presentation we will discuss how the plan reflects the community's initial ideas and suggestions for the park.

The development of the new General Plan was originally started in 1992 to be more consistent with the growing public demand. After considerable scoping, planning and analysis had been completed the process was suspended in 1994 due to budgeting shortfalls, the Department's reorganization of park operations and the need to identify and address a new concessionaire's concerns.

In the Fall of 2000, the California Department of Parks and Recreation reinitiated the General Plan development process and a public scoping meeting was held on March 22, 2001

Attend Our Presentation Meeting!

Please join us for a presentation of our 'Concept Plan' for *Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds*. The meeting will be held at:

Asilomar Conference Center
800 Asilomar Boulevard
Pacific Grove, CA
On Thursday

October 23rd from 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

The **Meeting Agenda** includes:

- Orientation to the planning process
- Review of the *Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds* 'Concept Plan'
- An overview of the completion of the General Plan

to update the previous General Plan process to the current public needs. The current General Plan therefore is building on the past planning analysis by reviewing the previously collected information and findings, and performing additional analysis to ensure that the data is accurate and relevant to the park's current trends, needs and conditions.

Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds

Since its original construction in 1913, the Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds has hosted millions of visitors within its coastal retreat facilities and 107 acres of forests, dunes and beaches. The original grounds and buildings were designed by renowned architect Julia Morgan in the arts and crafts style.



Merrill Hall

Activities include bicycling, birdwatching, strolling along the boardwalk and swimming in a heated pool. Monarch butterflies migrate through the park in their winter home in Pacific Grove. Asilomar is a popular destination for conferences, retreat, reunions, weddings and getaways.

Located in a prime scenic coastal location, the 60-acre conference grounds include 313 guest rooms in 30 buildings, and 38 meeting rooms. The guest rooms contain 692 beds and can accommodate up to 1,095 guests each night. The Crocker Hall dining room can seat as many as 850 guests.

The Department of Parks and Recreation's William Penn Mott Jr. Training Center is located within the Eastwood's Complex within the park. The Mott Center provides statewide training for Department of Parks and Recreation staff.

Natural Resources

Situated within an urban environment, the park supports a wide diversity of plant communities including active coastal dunes, coastal bluffs, coastal brackish marsh, and riparian scrub. In

addition, Asilomar's Central Dune Scrub and Monterey Pine Forest plant communities are considered sensitive plant communities under state regulations.

Eight special status plant species are known to occur at Asilomar including Menzie's wallflower, Tidestrom's lupine and Yadon's rein orchid. The park also has the southernmost population of Monterey spineflower.

Asilomar provides habitat for numerous common animals. In addition, five special status animal species are known to occur (or potentially occur) at the park. Smith's blue butterfly, Monarch butterfly and American peregrine falcon are federally and/or state listed species known to occur at the site. Other special status species reportedly observed at Asilomar in Black legless lizard and California brown pelican.



Asilomar Dune Area

Cultural Resources

Asilomar is rich in cultural resources with a variety of archaeological sites, historic structures and landscapes on its property. Archeological evidence suggests that Esselen and Costanoan Indians once occupied the site.

In 1875, the site was first developed as a "Christian Seaside Resort." In 1913, construction of the first of Julia Morgan's design's for the Asilomar Conference Grounds were completed. Today, 13 historic structures remain at Asilomar that were constructed between 1913 and 1927.

The General Plan Process

The Resource Inventory

A comprehensive inventory of Asilomar's natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources is being developed to guide general plan decisions and proposals for preserving, interpreting, managing, and developing the park's resources. Based on the detailed research and analysis performed between 1992 and 2003, this resource inventory will provide an important description of the park's existing conditions. A preliminary draft of this analysis is nearing completion and will be included in the Draft General Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (scheduled for public review in Winter or Spring 2004).

See Web site for General Park Information and to view the Concept Plan

If you can't make it to the presentation, view the Concept Plan at:

http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=21500

The Draft General Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

The Department of Parks and Recreation is currently in the process of completing the updated administrative draft of the Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds General Plan. Notice of Preparation was filed with the California State Clearinghouse on September 26th, 2003 (a copy is on our website) notifying the public and relevant public agencies that the agency is considering the preparation of a new General Plan and is accepting scoping comments.

After the 30 day public comment period from the Notice of Preparation is over, the information and scoping comments received by the agency will be collected and incorporated into the planning analysis. Using this new information with the past planning information, additional analysis will be performed to

determine a range of project alternatives and to select a preferred alternative for detailed impact analysis in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines.

The analysis and its findings will be published for public review as Draft Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds General Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (planned for Winter 2004). There will be an opportunity for further public review of the Draft General Plan Environmental Impact Statement at the end of this process prior to final acceptance.

Final General Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Once approved and finalized by the State Parks Commission, the Final General Plan will provide long term future management guidance for Asilomar. The Plan's guidelines will help direct future resource protection and management at Asilomar as well as providing direction for any significant changes to the park's facilities and operations. Additional environmental compliance will be performed in accordance with CEQA requirements for future redevelopment actions at Asilomar.

State Parks Mission Statement

The Mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



Concept Plan Highlights

The Concept Plan for the Asilomar General Plan will:

- Protect the learning environment for training center and conference attendees.
- Increase the efficiency of park operations, circulation, and parking.
- Restore and protect the historic core.
- Restore and protect its natural environment.
- Protect the ambience and character.
- Enhance Asilomar's sense of place as a "refuge by the sea."
- Enhance the visitor experience for both conference ground guests and day visitors.
- Enhance interpretation opportunities at the park, and
- Be sensitive to the park's surroundings and local community.

We want to hear from you!

If you are not currently on our mailing list, and would like to receive the newsletter and notice about future workshops, or if you wish to send written comments, please contact us at this address:

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Asilomar State Beach and



Conference Grounds General Plan

***21 Lower Ragsdale Drive
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***Come to the October 23rd
Presentation***